genetically modified (GM) crops. In view of various concerns related to the safety, efficacy and agronomic performance of transgenic seeds, extensive evaluation and regulatory approval process takes place before any GM plant is approved for commercial cultivation. This includes generation of relevant biosafety information and its elaborate analysis to ensure food, feed and environmental safety. The environmental safety assessment includes studies on pollen escape out-crossing, aggressiveness and weediness, effect of the gene on non-target organisms, presence of protein in soil and its effect on soil micro-flora, confirmation of the absence of terminator gene and baseline susceptibility studies. The food and feed safety studies include assessment on composition analysis, allergenicity and toxicological studies and feeding studies on fish, chicken, cows and buffaloes. In case, the transgenic crop is not found suitable for release in the environment or human consumption, the product is rejected during the trial stage itself. A final view on the commercialization of GM plants is taken only when there is a clear economic and technical justification for release of the product.

(b) There is no proposal to enforce a moratorium on all open field trials of GM crops. All field trials are subject to stringent norms such as maintaining (i) a crop specific isolation distance from the periphery of the experimental site to other sexually compatible rice fields as prescribed under the Indian Minimum Seed Certification Standards; (ii) biological barrier by planting border rows all around the experimental plot; (iii) submission of a validated event specific test protocol of 0.01% before undertaking the trials and (iv) Post harvest restrictions. The prescribed stipulations are adequate to minimize contamination due to gene flow, if any.

(c) The mandate of this Ministry under 'Rules for Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells 1989' of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, is to address only biosafety issues before according approval for environmental release. This Ministry has no role in deciding commercial cultivation of agricultural seeds, genetically modified or otherwise in any state including Kerala.

Levy of carbon fee

3420. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to levy carbon fee in order to reduce carbon in environment; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) There is no such proposal under consideration by the Government.

Pollution by slaughter houses

3421. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of illegal slaughter houses are polluting water of various important rivers and drinking water in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government has conducted any study in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether NHRC has also issued any orders in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the remedial measures taken by Government to check such activities of the slaughter houses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (f) As reported by CPCB, the Ministry of Agriculture have conducted a survey to identify the registered and unregistered slaughter houses in the country. The local municipal and administrative authorities are to take action for stopping all unauthorised activities including slaughtering of animals.

The measures taken by the Central Government to check pollution of rivers in various parts of the country from slaughter houses include notification of effluent standards under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) are empowered to grant consent to slaughter houses for discharge of effluent/emission as per the provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981. Central Pollution Control Board has published "Solid waste management in slaughter house" to guide the State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees and slaughter houses in taking pollution control measures. Training and awareness programmes are organized for the officials of the State Governments and slaughter houses.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had made recommendations to the Uttar Pradesh Government on closure of the illegal abattoir in Meerut. Subsequently, on submission of the action plan by the State Government, to control air and water pollution, the NHRC further recommended, as an interim measure, setting up of a temporary abattoir with ETP and the animal remains be disposed of by a private rendering plant. The NHRC directed the Municipal Commissioner and District Magistrate, Meerut to ensure demolition of the unauthorised furnaces.

Use of crackers on Deepavali and Dussehra

†3422. SHRI AVTAR SINGH KARIMPURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether use of firecrackers on Deepavali and Dussehra cause pollution;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the effective steps taken by Government to check this pollution?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.